



Iran War Update: July 18–20, 2026

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President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 17, outlining terms to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz over a 60-day period of further negotiations. However, on July 8, President Trump [declared](#) the MOU to be “over,” and both sides have resumed exchanging fire. JINSA continues to release regular updates about the conflict. The update below includes information since [JINSA’s last update](#) as of July 20 at 10:45 am ET.

Iranian missiles and drones launched since June 14 U.S.-Iran MOU announcement: **At least 314** (65 between July 17–20)

Ships that have seemingly breached the U.S. blockade: **2**

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since June 14 MOU announcement: **At least 668** (at least 16 between July 17–July 20)

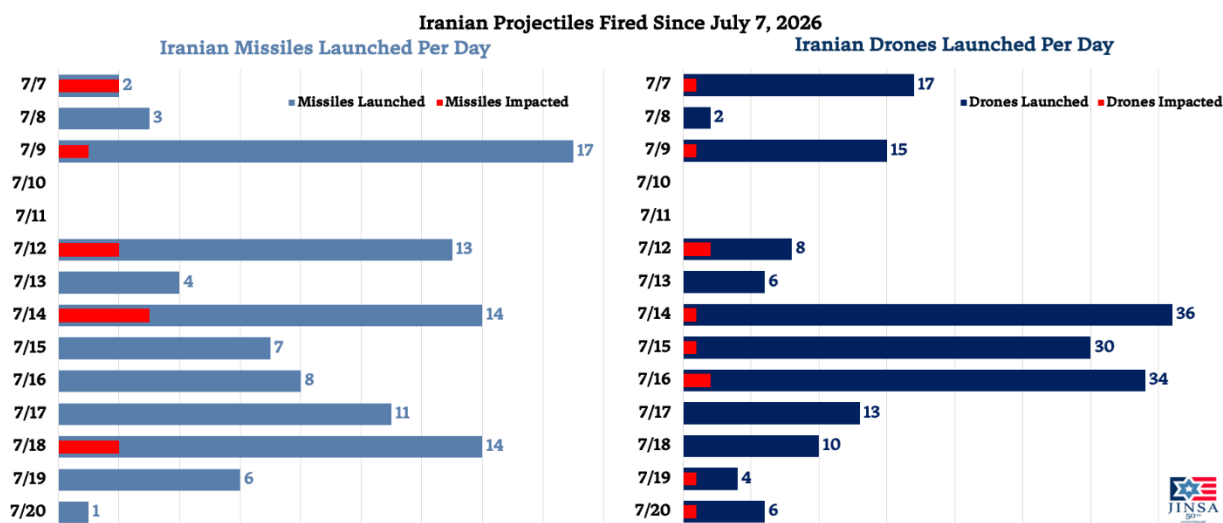
Daily average of ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since June 14 MOU announcement: **17.8**

Daily average of ships transiting Strait of Hormuz prior to the Iran war: **138**

1. Overview

- On July 17–19, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) [struck](#) Iranian surveillance and air defense facilities, military logistics infrastructure, weapons storage facilities, maritime capabilities, launch sites for drones and missiles, and communications networks, according to [statements](#) from [CENTCOM](#).
 - » On July 18, U.S. strikes also [targeted](#) the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) forces that launched the strikes that killed American servicemembers in Jordan the previous day.
- On July 17–20, Iran conducted at least 31 missile and drone attacks that targeted Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, and commercial shipping.
 - » On July 18, at an unspecified site in northern Iraq, one American servicemember was killed, and another was wounded “during a controlled detonation of unexploded ordnance from a downed Iranian one-way attack drone,” according to a [statement](#) from CENTCOM.
 - » On July 17, two American servicemembers were [killed](#), and one servicemember went missing during Iranian missile and drone attacks targeting the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan.

- Four servicemembers were medically evacuated following the attack and have been discharged.
- According to reporting from *The Wall Street Journal* on July 18, the Iranian attack on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base also [struck](#) manned and unmanned aircraft.
- On July 20, a U.S. official who spoke with *The Washington Post* [indicated](#) that “The U.S. is planning for a wider war” but “We do not have enough [resources] to safely sustain operations, and I don’t think the White House is aware of that.”
- On July 20, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen [declared](#) that they were imposing a maritime blockade on Saudi Arabia after a four-year ceasefire collapsed, with both sides exchanging fire last week.
- U.S. officials cited by *The Wall Street Journal* on July 18 [shared](#) that Iran has adjusted to American defensive capabilities, and is now launching missiles that move at higher speeds and can be maneuvered while traveling towards the Earth.
 - » The U.S. officials noted that Iran’s capacity to strike sensitive targets has prompted concerns of Chinese or Russian targeting assistance.
- On July 17, American and Israeli outlets [reported](#) that dozens of American refueling tankers, which enable longer-range aerial combat operations, will soon arrive at various unspecified air force bases across Israel. Fourteen of these tankers were [deployed](#) over the weekend, according to Israeli security officials who spoke with Israel’s *Walla News*.
 - » According to *Walla News*, many of these tankers are [expected to remain](#) in Israel on a permanent basis.



2. Diplomatic Engagement

Iran

- On July 20, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that Qatar had proposed a 10-day ceasefire to the United States and Iran.
- On July 19, President Trump [told](#) NewsNation that he “couldn’t care less” about Iran’s [announcement](#) the previous day that it had “suspended” its commitments under the MOU.

Lebanon

- After a [meeting](#) in Washington, D.C., between Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun on July 19, a State Department readout indicated that Secretary Rubio had “commended the courage of the Government of Lebanon, under President

Aoun's leadership, for their determined effort to reclaim Lebanon's sovereignty, disarm Hezbollah and dismantle its terrorist infrastructure, and move towards peace."

- Local Lebanese media [reported](#) on July 17 that the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has re-deployed to the towns of Froun and Burj Qalaouiyah in southern Lebanon as part of the [Trilateral Framework](#) agreement with Israel and the United States.
 - » The State Department later [confirmed](#) this in a July 20 press release, which read, "Today, pilot zone operations began in the villages of Froun, Srifa, and Zawtar Al-Gharbiya in accordance with the Trilateral Framework and under the auspices of the Military Coordination Group for Lebanon."
 - » The statement continued, "This milestone is a direct outcome of last week's discussions between Israel and Lebanon in Rome. The United States will continue working closely with both parties to implement the Framework to a successful conclusion."

3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

Iran

- On the morning of July 20, Iranian media [reported](#) U.S. strikes throughout the country, including multiple sites in Bushehr, the city hosting Iran's only civilian nuclear plant.
- On the evening of July 19, U.S. forces [carried out](#) strikes on Iranian regime targets for the ninth night in a row.
- On the afternoon of July 19, Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, without providing a time of attack, [condemned](#) an American strike targeting the country's Darkhovin nuclear power plant, which was under construction.
- In the early hours of July 19, Iranian media reported that explosions occurred in several locations, including areas near Hajiabad, Sirik, Bandar Abbas, and Qeshm Island.
- On the evening of July 18, CENTCOM [posted](#) on X that American forces "successfully hit Iranian military coastal surveillance and air defense facilities, maritime capabilities, and missile and drone storage sites to continue degrading Iranian military capabilities," noting that "American military assets also targeted Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces that launched attacks against U.S. service members in Jordan on July 17."
- On the evening of July 17, U.S. forces [launched](#) strikes against several targets throughout Iran, including "surveillance sites, military logistics infrastructure, underground weapons storage, and maritime capabilities. U.S. forces employed fighter aircraft, aerial drones, and warships in addition to other assets," according to CENTCOM.
- On July 18, *The Wall Street Journal* [reported](#) that the United States will send additional fighter aircraft, including F-35s and F-16s, to the Middle East.
- On July 17, *Axios* reported that the United States told Israel it will [send dozens](#) of refueling aircraft to Israel, with the IDF later indicating that they will [deploy](#) to Israeli bases and not Ben Gurion Airport.
 - » Israel's *Walla News*, on July 19, [reported](#) that the United States plans to station at least 100 refueling tankers across Israel, including some at Israel's civilian Ramon Airport as well as several Israeli air force bases.
 - » According to *Walla News*, 14 American refueling tankers were deployed to Israel over the weekend.
- On July 17, CENTCOM [stated](#) that the day before, U.S. forces had "destroyed the Chah Bahar Shahid Kalantari Port surveillance tower, part of a maritime surveillance network along Iran's Gulf of Oman coastline."

Lebanon

- On July 18, the IDF [eliminated](#) a Hezbollah cell operating a drone near Israeli troops in the southern Lebanese town of Kfar Tebnit.

Syria

- On July 19, Israel's air defenses [intercepted](#) a drone of unknown origin that was flying over the Israeli-Syrian border.

4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping

- Secretary of Energy Chris Wright [stated](#) on July 19 that “almost all the public data I’ve seen [on Strait of Hormuz shipping] is incorrect.” Secretary Wright challenged the idea that shipping flows remain low, saying that “we’re at a little under 14 million barrels [of oil] a day from the Arabian Gulf region. That’s two-thirds of pre-conflict traffic.”
 - » According to data from Windward Intelligence, an analytics firm, just two energy tankers have transited the Strait since July 19.
 - » While Secretary Wright addressed the volume of energy shipments in the Strait, Kpler and Windward shipping data suggest the total number of commercial ships transiting the Strait each day is less than one-fourth of pre-war levels.
 - » Secretary Wright added that the United States “will continue to assure flow of traffic” in the Strait of Hormuz.
- Kpler shipping data reviewed by JINSA suggests two cargo vessels, the *Mahya Yaya* and the *Mahya Roos*, crossed the U.S. blockade line traveling outbound from Iran to Brazil in recent days. However, since the United States permitted dozens of cargo ships to travel between Iran and Brazil for humanitarian reasons during the April 14–June 18 blockade, these two ships may have also been allowed to pass across the blockade line.

5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

- Iran is reportedly weighing [expanding](#) its regional attacks to Israeli targets, but there is internal disagreement between different factions of the Iranian regime on this question, according to Israeli officials who spoke with *Walla News* over the weekend.

Lebanon

- A soldier in the LAF was [killed](#) on July 18 in southern Lebanon by an explosive device planted by Hezbollah.

Bahrain

- On July 17–20, Iran [conducted](#) at least 12 separate missile and drone attacks against Bahrain, and the kingdom intercepted an unspecified number of projectiles targeting the country.
 - » On July 20, Bahrain said that drones [targeted](#) the kingdom’s civil air navigation systems serving the Bahrain Flight Information Region. The attack did not disrupt air traffic or flight operations.

Iraq

- On July 19, the Kurdistan Freedom Party [said](#) an Iranian drone strike wounded eight of its members at a camp near Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan.
 - » The PAK [claimed](#) that Iran used white phosphorus munitions in the strike and called on the United Nations and other international organizations to investigate the incident and hold Tehran accountable.

- On July 18, a U.S. service member was [killed](#), and another service member was injured while they were working to safely detonate an unexploded ordinance from an intercepted Iranian drone.

Jordan

- On July 19, Jordanian and U.S. forces [intercepted](#) three Iranian ballistic missiles targeting Aqaba, while a fourth missile landed in an open area, without any reported injuries. Israel also [launched](#) Iron Dome interceptors to destroy missile fragments falling in the vicinity of Eilat. Interceptor debris [fell](#) in an open area near the city and did not cause any injuries.
- On July 18, Jordan [announced](#) that it intercepted 10 Iranian missiles targeting the kingdom, with no casualties or material damage reported.
 - » Iran separately [claimed](#) that it targeted fuel storage tanks at Jordan's al-Azraq air base.
- On July 17, Iranian ballistic missile and drone attacks in Jordan [killed](#) two U.S. service members and left another missing as U.S. and partner forces defended against the strikes, according to CENTCOM.
 - » The two servicemembers killed in the Iranian strike on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base have been [identified](#) as 1st Lt. Tyler James Feehan and Pvt. Isabella Gonzales.
 - » Four other U.S. service members were medically evacuated but later discharged, while personnel with minor injuries returned to duty.
 - » On July 19, CENTCOM said U.S. personnel [recovered](#) unidentified remains during the search for the U.S. service member reported missing after the July 17 Iranian attack in Jordan. The remains were undergoing examination to determine their identity.

Kuwait

- From July 17–20, Iran conducted at least 10 separate attacks against Kuwait.
 - » Overnight on July 18–19, Iran [claimed](#) that it targeted two U.S. military facilities in Kuwait with drones, including Camp Udairi and Ali Al Salem Air Base, in response to overnight U.S. strikes on Iranian territory. Kuwait did not immediately confirm the reported attack.
 - » Earlier on July 18, Kuwaiti authorities reported that Iranian attacks [caused](#) a fire at a power generation and water desalination plant and significant [damage](#) to an oil facility. The attacks caused the shutdown of several power generation plants and injuries to several people.

Maritime

- On July 19, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Center [reported](#) that a vessel caught fire from an unknown cause in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Kumzar, Oman.
- On July 17, the IRGC Navy [targeted](#) a Thai-flagged vessel in the Strait of Hormuz after it allegedly ignored warnings and attempted to transit without permission, according to Iran's Tasnim News Agency.

6. Threats, Condemnations, and Statements from Iranian and Proxy Officials

- On July 20, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [declared](#) that “the reality is that today the Islamic Republic of Iran is engaged in a full-scale war,” adding, “we must be realistic and accept the natural consequences of this resistance.”
- On July 19, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [spoke](#) about the strike that killed former Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei during a series of simultaneous high-level meetings on the war's first day.

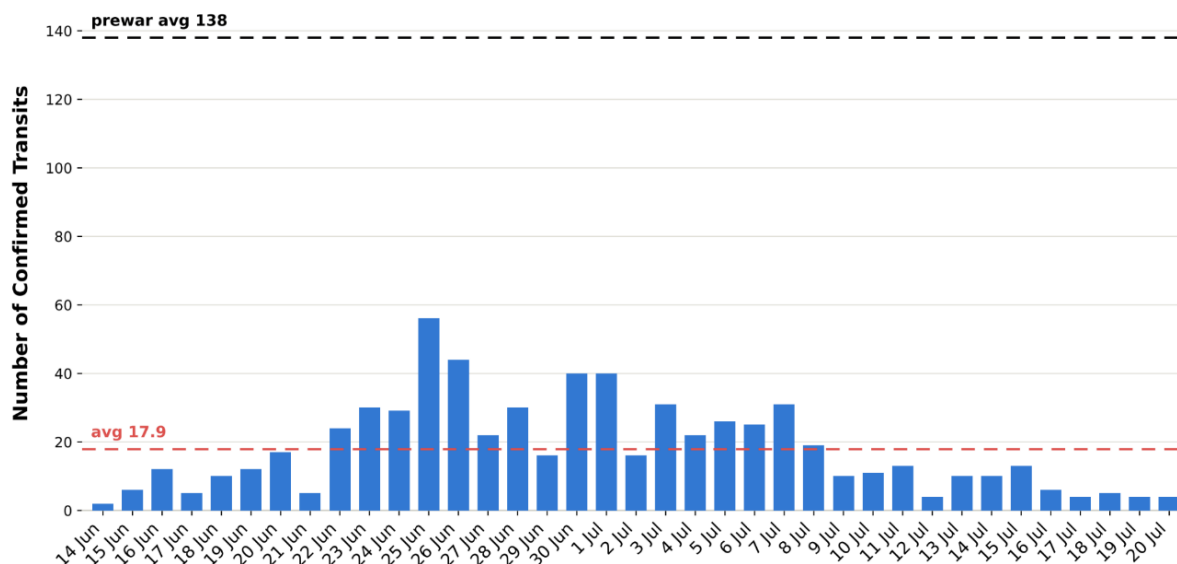
- » He stated that “the enemy’s knowledge of these meetings was the result of an information breach that probably still exists.”
- On July 17, Iranian Supreme Leader Advisor Mohsen Rezaei [threatened](#) that “If US strikes continue for several more days, we will move into a phase of full-scale offensive operations.”

7. International Response

- On July 18, Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, the Chief of the Gulf Cooperation Council, [condemned](#) Iranian attacks on Jordan, Bahrain, and Kuwait, stating, “Iran’s actions constitute a highly dangerous escalation, a grave violation of international law and the United Nations (UN) Charter, as well as war crimes requiring international accountability and prosecution, given the deliberate targeting of infrastructure and civilian facilities.”

Estimated Casualties of Iranian Operations			JINSA
Country	Killed	Injured	Notes
United States	17	404+	1 missing; 10 seriously wounded; 358+ returned to duty
Israel	65+	7,795+	Killed include 26 civilians and 39 killed fighting Hezbollah (38 soldiers, 1 contractor)
Iran	3,688+	26,520+	Includes 1,221+ military; Iran International reports 4,700+ security personnel killed
Azerbaijan	—	4	All civilians
Bahrain	3	46	Killed include a Moroccan contractor; injured include 5 Emirati soldiers
Iraq	127	Several	Includes 20 in Iraqi Kurdistan
Jordan	—	31+	
Kuwait	8	161+	Injured includes 90 soldiers
Lebanon	4,328	12,229	Figures do not distinguish Hezbollah operatives from civilians
Oman	3+	17+	
Qatar	7	23	Killed occurred in March 22 helicopter crash
Saudi Arabia	3	23	Killed include 1 Saudi national and 2 foreign nationals
Syria	4+	Several	
United Arab Emirates	12	230	
International Waters	10	Several	

Data compiled by JINSA from various sources.



8. JINSA Resources

- Jonathan Ruhe, [“The Long, Dark Shadow of the Iran Nuclear Deal,”](#) *The Dispatch*, July 17, 2026
- Yoni Tobin, [Oil For Tehran, Not Us: Removing Iran’s Strait Jacket on Global Energy Flows,](#) July 8, 2026
- John Hannah, [“How Trump Can Win Back Allies and Rejuvenate U.S. Diplomacy on Iran,”](#) *The Hill*, July 5, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [Getting on Base: Israel is the Solution to Vulnerability of U.S. Bases in the Gulf,](#) July 2, 2026
- Hussein Aboubakr Mansour, [The Unmaking of America’s Persian Gulf Order,](#) June 26, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, [How the MOU’s “Nuclear Status Quo” Negates a Good Iran Deal,](#) June 24, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, John Hannah, Blaise Misztal, and Jonathan Ruhe, [Reversal of Fortunes: The U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding,](#) June 23, 2026
- Ari Cicurel, [“Trump Went to War to End Iran’s Missile Threat. Now He Endorses It,”](#) *Jewish News Syndicate*, June 23, 2026
- [Infographic - The Iran MOU: Did the U.S. Understand the Assignment?,](#) June 18, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, [“Epic Fury Ends with a Flop,”](#) *Jewish News Syndicate*, June 17, 2026
- Blaise Misztal, [Uncertifiable and Illegal, but Probably Unstoppable: Congress Must Review the Iran MOU,](#) June 17, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, [The Origins of the Iran Deal,](#) June 16, 2026
- Sarah Havdala, [While the War Raged On: Repression in Iran,](#) June 16, 2026
- [Infographic: What’s the Deal with the Deal?](#) June 12, 2026

- John Hannah, "[Trump Is Stuck and His Iran Leverage Is Spent](#)," *The Washington Examiner*, June 12, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, "[We Need a Long-Term Strategy to Deal With Iran](#)," *The Dispatch*, June 11, 2026
- Maj Gen Charles Corcoran, USAF (ret.) and Yoni Tobin, "[What the Iran War Shows About the Future of Warfighting](#)," *RealClearDefense*, June 8, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, "[Trump Is Lost on Iran](#)," June 4, 2026